DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 154 406 CS 204 134

TITLE Educational Writers Guide.
INSTITUTION Alaska State Dept. of Education, Juneau.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Check Lists; Composition Skills (Literary); Copyrights; *Editing; *Guidelines; Illustrations; *Instructional Materials; *Publications; *Standards; *Writing; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this manual is to enable authors of educational materials to plan, organize, and prepare materials in a format that is accurate and clear and that requires a minimum of rewriting and editing before publication. The following topics are discussed: the use of reference and copyrighted materials; the use of illustrations; the development of original material; the preparation of an introduction, headings, study assignments, discussion topics, and study guides; manuscript style and format; and sentence and paragraph construction. The manual includes a checklist to aid authors in checking the quality of their writing, a list of minimum standards for the preparation of instructional materials, and a step-by-step description of the review process used by the Alaska Department of Education in copy editing a manuscript and in following a publication from its inception through its distribution. (GW)

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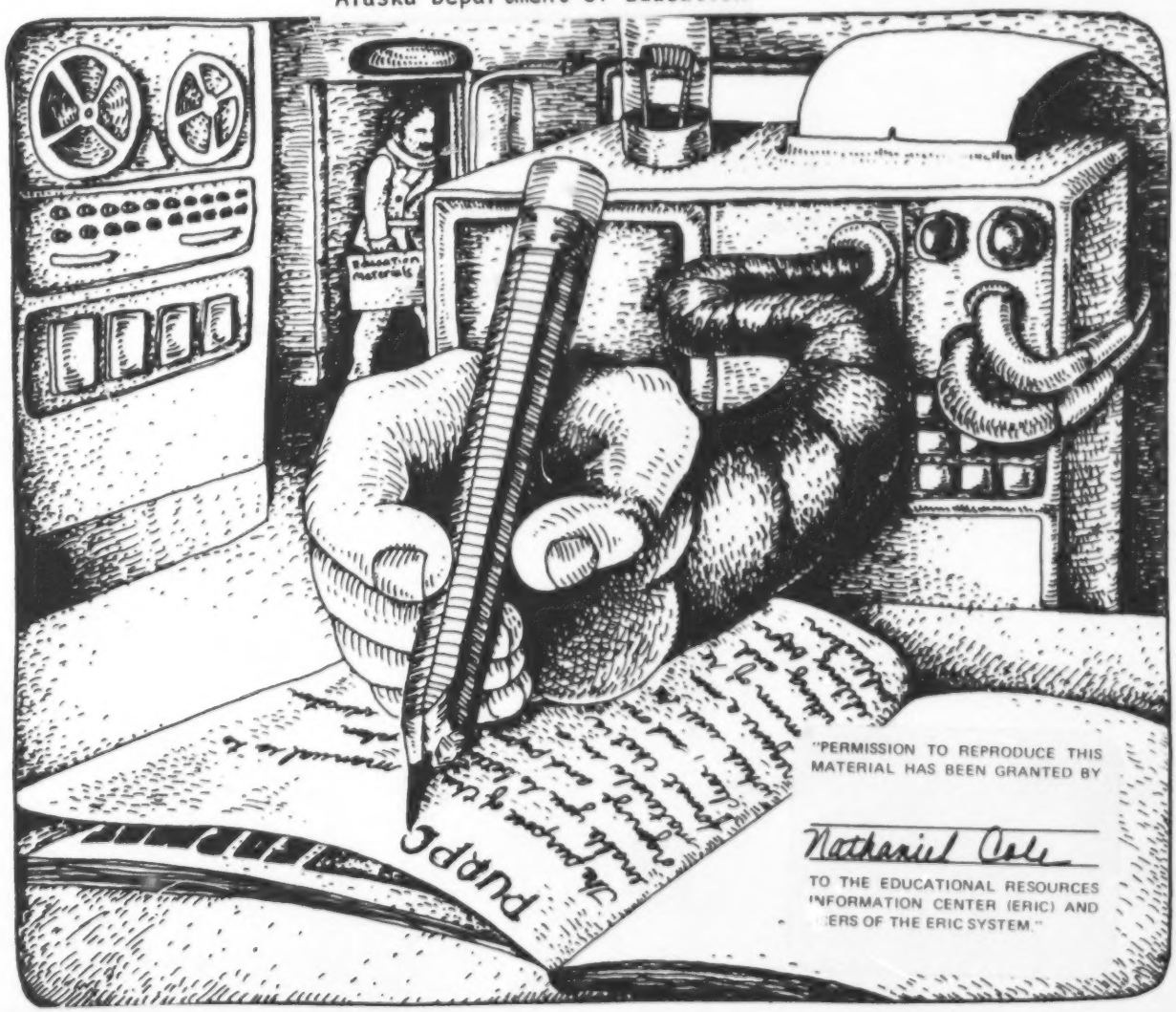
EDUCATIONAL WRITERS GUIDE

Alaska Department of Education



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CS204/13K

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A MANUAL FOR THE PREPARATION OF EDUCATION MATERIALS

Alaska Department of Education

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to enable you to better plan, organize and prepare education materials in a format that is accurate and clear, and one which will require a minimum of rewriting and editing before publication. Reading this manual before you start work is important for two reasons: (1) as the author you will have a better idea of what is expected of you; and, (2) you will be able to complete the project more efficiently and economically.

As the author you will write or compile materials, and assume responsibility for their content, accuracy, and organization into a presentation or style that is clear, readable and acceptable. You are responsible for preparing a complete manuscript and submitting it in an approved format. If needed, the Department of Education can provide information on style or method.

It is the opinion of the Department of Education that materials published under its aegis is the author's work, an must remain so. Our editor's job is to assist the author in saying what the author wants to say – in .he author's own way. Editors will change copy only for the purposes of improving clarity and retaining the author's style throughout the material. Any substantive changes to appear in print under the author's name will have been seen, approved, and accepted by the author before publication.

The information presented in this manual may seem to add an additional burden to an already difficult task but this is not its purpose. It will assist you in doing a job that will reflect well on you as the author, a professional, and meet the high standards of the Department of Education. Following these instructions will make possible a publication of which you can be proud, and be of greatest value to all who use it.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Reference Materials

It is the responsibility of the author to insure that only the most relevant and latest edition of references are used. When the choice of reference is left to your discretion you must select the most suitable and current. If collateral references are to be included as part of an instructional package, only the material directly related to the subject is to be used. Supplemental material that could be included, but may not be available locally, needs to be annotated, referenced and located; e.g., name of the publication, name of the publisher, SMERC, ERIC, AIM, ARM, etc.

Use of Copyrighted Material

Authors sometimes plagiarize by borrowing passages, drawings, charts, and data from previously published material and then passing it off as their own. Such practices violate copyright protection laws, the rules of ethics, and could lead to lawsuits for yourself as well as the State of Alaska. Authors should present concepts and ideas in their own language and in terms the ultimate consumer will understand. Simplify as much as possible. Avoid paraphrasing or unnecessarily repeating previously published material.

If previsouly published material is used, give proper credit to the source. When the material to be quoted is more than a sentence or so, written permission of the authors or copyright holders must be obtained. Submit the letter of permission to the Department of Education with the manuscript. Written permission must always be requested for the use of illustrations, photographs, drawings, and the like. Utilize reference techniques and give the source such as the author's name, the exact title of the document, the name of the publisher, the place of publication, year published and the page number on which the borrowed material was found. Be sure that the reference style you choose is consistent throughout your manuscript. Sources for reference and footnote style are found in the bibliography of this manual.

These necessary steps are not intended to discourage authors. Rather, they are intended to foster scholarship and to prevent the possibility of legal action against the author and the Alaska Department of Education. Permission is not required to use quotations and illustrations previously printed in Department of Education documents. However, the **original source** should be indicated and proper credit given.

NOTICE
WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

THE COPYRIGHT LAW OF THE UNITED STATES (TITLE 17, UNITED STATES CODE) GOVERNS THE MAKING OF PHOTOCOPIES OR OTHER REPRODUCTIONS OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL.

UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS SPECIFIED IN THE LAW, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES ARE AUTHORIZED TO FURNISH A PHOTOCOPY OR OTHER REPRODUCTION. ONE OF THESE SPECIFIED CONDITIONS IS THAT THE PHOTOCOPY OR OTHER REPRODUCTION IS NOT TO BE "USED FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN PRIVATE STUDY, SCHOLARSHIP, OR RESEARCH." IF A USER MAKES A REQUEST FOR, OR LATER USES, A PHOTOCOPY OR REPRODUCTION FOR PURPOSES IN EXCESS OF "FAIR USE," THAT USER MAY BE LIABLE FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT.

Use of Illustrations in the Text

Many types of illustrations can be used to support a written text. Illustrations should be selected to clarify or amplify text but never replace it. Glossy black-and-white photographic prints or black ink line drawings on white paper are preferred. Black and white pictures and drawings clipped out of brochures, journals, or books are sometimes used. However, they generally do not reproduce well. Written permission must be obtained from the copyright holder or publisher to reproduce such material.

Before submitting the final draft of the manuscript, the author should prepare a list of planned illustrations with a title for each, indicating by figure number where each illustration is intended to be placed in the text. An example is shown below.

Figure 1 to be placed here.

The illustrations themselves should be located in their appropriate place in the text; or numbered, arranged in order, and submitted in a separate folder.

Original Writing

You have been selected as an author on the basis of your expertise and knowledge. The Department of Education is depending upon you to share your experience and knowledge of methods, techniques, and materials. You have the responsibility of communicating through the most appropriate medium and by using plain, simple language and being careful and accurate.

When developing original material you should not reiterate or paraphrase the contents of material already produced. Major contributions will be your unique ideas, concepts, media techniques, and intimate first-hand knowledge of a specific subject. You should organize your thoughts into a brief and orderly outline before writing. Develop each section of the outline in whatever detail you feel appropriate, keeping the text factual and the writing clear and simple. After the outline has been developed discuss it with appropriate program personnel in the Department of Education.

If the Department of Education suggests a specific direction for the product either in terms of content or design you have an obligation to follow these directions.

Organization of Topics

Some topics are self-contained, and other times their significance relies on readings, previous knowledge, or supplemental study materials.

Introduction. An introduction is important in that it will let the reader know at the beginning of a topic what is going to be covered. The introduction is useful as you develop the main ideas. It should introduce the main subject, show its importance, and provide a comprehensive view. This approach is valid whether the material belongs in a written text, slides, film or TV tape. Occasionally it is best to write the introduction last. If the introduction is written first it should be carefully checked for accuracy after all other sections are completed.

Text. A written text is constructed with center or main headings, side headings, and run-in headings followed by their supporting paragraphs. An example of the main heading can be found on page 2, GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT; a side heading, **Organization of Topics**; run-in headings, *Introduction* and *Text*, are found on this page.

If you construct your topics using this format, you should be successful. Headings should be used liberally. They help to divide the larger subject into smaller parts that are more easily and quickly read, making it easier for the reader to analyze and comprehend your ideas. If an idea is very complex sometimes an illustration or table can be used to clarify your statement or idea. A suitable drawing or photograph can be used to supplement an idea or statement, relieve the monotony of reading solid, complex material and arouse interest.

Length of reading material may vary depending upon the complexity of the subject being covered, the amount of pertinent reading materials in the references and texts, and reading level of the consumer.

Study assignment. Text material in the topic is typically followed by a study assignment consisting of additional readings. Only those pages that specifically apply to the topic or major headings should be assigned. In general, study assignments that relate to more than one major heading should be avoided. However, the occasional repeating of a reading assignment may be necessary or desirable for review purposes.

Topics for discussion. It is desirable to develop topics, problems, or questions for discussion in the classroom. When this immediately follows the study assignment, it provides for valuable discussion of the most important ideas and principles. Interesting and pertinent subjects

should be selected from your experiences. A hypothetical situation may be particularly thought-provoking. Such situations followed by a carefully designed questions can be very useful to the instructor in leading discussions. Generally, one to six problems or questions are sufficient.

Study guide. If a study guide is to be written it should contain self-help exercises to help the reader determine whether or not the topic and assigned reading are understood. All questions used in the study guide must be based on the material in the topic or on assigned reading.

It is suggested that the study guide section always begin on a fresh right-hand page. Depending upon the length and complexity of the topic and reading assignments, 10 to 30 questions or problems should be prepared. These questions can be of the "fill-in" type, with no more than two or three fill-in terms per problem or statement.

For review purposes (and to also be included in the teacher's answer manual) you should provide the fill-in answers for each study guide statement or questions. Indicate the title and page number of the reference where the correct answer can be found.

Sometimes exercises of a type other than fill-in can be used. The choice of type is dependent to some extent on the subject being treated and its technicalities. Among these have been true/false and written problem-solving exercises, arithmetical calculations, or sketching. However, the fill-in type is preferred.

Tests tend towards a more standardized format than those of review questions. They generally are made up of objective type questions, most often the multiple-choice type. Typically, tests will have 10 to 15 multiple-choice questions for each topic, depending upon its length and complexity. The objective type question is used mainly because it is believed by some educators that they are more easy to grade.

Depending upon the nature and complexity of the topic material, diagrams and sketches can be reproduced and then several multiple-choice questions can be based upon the drawings. The writer must identify the correct answer for each question in a teacher's answer manual if one is to be provided as a condition of contract.

Indicate the reference and page number where the information for the question and answer can be located.

Test questions, no matter what type, must be based upon information contained in the text or in the study assignments. A student will become very discouraged after having studied lessons well encounter difficult test questions that are not based upon the text reading or the assigned study material.

Manuscript Style and Format

The manuscript must be typed double-spaced, using a single side of an 8½ x 11-inch sheet of good quality typing paper. At least one inch of margin should be allowed on all sides of the page. Typing should be legible and writing clear enough so that an editor can determine your intent. Be sure to number the pages, indicate the points at which the tables or figures are to be inserted (see page 3 of this manual) and provide a numbered list of the tables and figures. If you wish, you might paste

the tables in the text at the points where they best fit. Tables and figures should always refer to textual references. All illustrations should be marked with an identifying number. If possible, submit them pasted or taped to an 8½ x 11-inch sheet of paper, with numbers and titles. All illustrations and photographs must have a title in addition to the identifying number. The credit line for borrowed illustrations should be taped at the bottom of the page on which they appear. The written permission to use them should be included with the manuscript when it is sent to the Department of Education.

Headings for Written Publications

To some extent final headings are developed by the editor. However, the author should divide the material adequately and should show organization through the use of pertinent or suggested headings.

Sentence and Paragraph Construction

Sentences should be relatively short, simple in construction and clear in meaning. If the writer is not really skillful at constructing complex sentences, it will be better to communicate with fairly short, simple sentences. Students generally are accustomed to simple, uncomplicated writing. The subject-verb-object word order is preferred, with modifiers being placed as closely as possible to the word or words that they modify.

Effective paragraphs are made up from the type of sentences discussed. The "topic" or main sentence should come first. Sentences that give detail or make explanation follow. You can make paragraphs more effective by insuring that sentences are adequately connected with conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs that show relationship and logical connection.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE AUTHOR

No matter how talented or experienced, authors must admit that writing is not an easy task but involves conscientious, concentrated effort over a relatively long period of time. Writers will find that they must produce a determined amount of work in a given length of time if deadlines are to be met. However, steady production of work is only one of the author's objectives, and it may not be the most important one. Production can be measured easily in terms of quantity; but, perhaps the most important is the quality of the writing. If a writer produces a high volume of work but so low in quality that it cannot be accepted, nothing has been accomplished. To be successful as a writer, a person must, therefore, place the highest value on quality. It is the rare individual who can produce an acceptable manuscript on the first draft. Therefore, any writer will need to rewrite (perhaps several times), proof, correct, edit, and do a final reading of the manuscript before achievin good quality.

Writers should be critical of their own writing. It is also helpful to share the draft manuscript with colleagues for critical comments. Writers and critics should ask themselves these questions:

1. Have I said what I wanted to say?
2. Should I have added more information?

3. Are all my statements factual and are they verifiable as facts?
4. Are my terms consistent?
5. Have I written with simplicity and clarity?
6. Have I written on the level of the potential reader?
7. Do I need illustrations to clarify or amplify difficult points or concepts?
8. Have I checked the spelling of all words of which I am not 100 percent certain?

Other important questions could be asked, and perhaps some will occur as you analyze your work objectively. Perfection in the final manuscript is certainly not expected, but honesty and effort is expected. Such efforts should bring fairly good quality, especially if this manual is followed.

The writer should not be overly concerned with such composition mechanics as punctuation and capitalization. Rather, the writer should be concerned mainly with getting the information down in simple, clear and concise language. A good rule to follow is "State the idea so that it cannot be misunderstood."

STANDARDS FOR PREPARATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The following minimum standards must be used by authors in the preparation of manuscript material.

1. Outline of the manuscript content.
2. Use only the latest editions of referenced textbooks, pamplets, and other source materials.
3. Insure that the manuscript material is accurate and consistent with what is said in the reference and other source materials.
4. Type all material (double spaced) to make easier evaluation and editing possible.
5. If illustrations are to be used, submit glossy 5" x 7" prints or larger, clear inked sketches, or clear penciled sketches. List the illustrations by number and title indicating where in the manuscript they are to be used. Originals of drawings and photos can be reduced or enlarged before going to print.
6. Give specific directions for material that may need special treatment in the final document.
7. If copyrighted or borrowed material (including illustrations) is used, obtain the written permission of the copyright holder and submit the original of the letter with the manuscript. If this is not possible, at least provide the exact source of the material. Infringement of federal copyright laws can bring severe penalities upon you, the writer and the Alaska Department of Education.
8. Submit a complete bibliography identifying materials from which assignments have been made. Also include references that should be kept in the library. Each bibliographical item must include the author's complete name, book title, publisher's name, place of publication, edition, date, and address of publisher. Be sure that bibliographical style is consistant throughout.
9. Check reading assignments and references for relevancy and accuracy.
10. Base all multiple-choice questions on the text or the assigned reading material. The number of questions must be adequate to cover the material in the topic.
11. Indicate correct answers to exercises and questions, including sources with exact page numbers where the answers can be found.
12. Validate study guide and questions against the assigned study materials.

Public Information Section

1. *Copy editing the manuscript.* The purpose of copy editing is to prepare the manuscript so that the printer copies it exactly the way the author and the Department of Education wishes the publication to appear in print. The functions of copy editing are as follows:

a. *Legibility.* Every letter of every word must not only be readable but so quickly and easily read that the printer can concentrate entirely upon the technical job of typesetting without worrying about what the author meant to write. If too many corrections and insertions have to be made in the draft manuscript those portions of the manuscript should be retyped in the clean copy form. If the manuscript is in a hopeless condition when it is first received by the Department the author should resubmit the manuscript in better form. The requirement of legibility applies also to notes of instruction to the printer.

b. *Consistency.* The Department of Education uses the *Associated Press Style Book* as a guide for style. The copy editor is responsible for seeing that the manuscript has consistancy from beginning to end. The following areas are particularly susceptible to errors: Spelling, transliteration, punctuation, abbreviations, alternate forms, uniform style for auxiliary material such as tables, footnotes, mathematical, chemical formulas, legends under illustrations, et cetera, capitalization, compounding words, syllable division, and the use of italics.

c. *Grammar.* One of the copy editor's major responsibilities is to make sure that the grammar is correct in the manuscript before it finally goes to the printer.

d. *Clarity and style.* The delicacy of the copy editor's job in dealing with grammar is slight compared with what must be done to make the author's meaning clear when the author has not done that job properly. If there is nothing actually incorrect in what the manuscript says the author may be indignant about any changes unless the reason for change is patiently explained. Authors are more sensitive to the style of writing. Authors tend to feel that style is a basic part of the author's work. Some authors feel that a manuscript should not be accepted unless the writing style can be accepted with it.

e. *Factual Accuracy.* This part of the copy editor's job is another one of those for which it is most difficult to draw rules. The copy editor does not have the time to check every fact in the book but a good copy editor needs to develop a "sixth sense" that would lead towards the check of statements which appear suspicious. If the copy editor finds excessive errors in the manuscript or initial production draft, it is the responsibility of the copy editor to determine that the manuscript is so unsound that it must be sent back to the author or handed over to a specialist for a complete revision.

f. *Legality and propriety.* Many of the questions about legality and propriety of a manuscript will have to be considered and answered before a manuscript is finally accepted for publication. It is the copy editor's responsibility to the Department of Education to watch in detail for anything in the manuscript that might be contrary to decency and propriety, the laws of the State, and policies of the Department of Education.

g. *Production and details.* It is the copy editor's major responsibility to insure that the manuscript is really 100 percent complete for production. This includes title page; table of contents; preface; footnotes; illustrations; legends for illustrations, maps or charts; chapter headings; bibliography; glossary; tables; et cetera. It is also one of the copy editor's important jobs to provide appropriate instructions to the printer regarding size and kind of type, length of type line, spacing between lines, and other matters of product design.

Program Unit Responsibilities

1. Originate and approve an idea for publication; determine what the publication will be by deciding upon the purpose of the work, the audience to which it will be directed, and its scope.

   a. Appoint an educational advisory committee to review the contractor's proposal, material content, and media approach.

   b. *First reading.* Appoint someone in or outside of the Department of Education for sampling and overview, the purpose of which is to decide whether the Department of Education should seriously consider the material prepared. When an outside reader is appointed the reader should be a specialist in the subject matter being presented, an authority on publication style, or having some other special qualifications. Careful selection of a reader is one of the program unit's most important jobs when it has contracted with an individual or agency for the development of material to be released to the general public over the name of the Department of Education. A careful selection of a reader is useful in two ways: 1) it provides special talents the Department does not have on its own staff; and 2) is provides other points of view to correct or confirm opinions of Department staff.

2. Provide adequate budget for material development, publication and distribution.

   a. Prepare appropriate contracts and agreements.

3. Determine who will prepare the final manuscript, author or editor.

4. Determine early whether the finished material will be submitted for publication informing the Department of Education's Public Information Section of this decision, and keeping the division director informed of progress.

5. Provide the division director with sufficient information to make a judgment on the financial feasibility of the publication.

6. Make certain the manuscript submitted is as complete as possible and free from sexist language.

   a. Submit the draft manuscript for review and comment to the program manager responsible for eliminating sex bias/sterotyping.

7. Permit the Public Information Section to exercise the normal editing and copy-editing responsibilities of a publisher.

   a. Insure that appropriate copyright releases have been obtained.

8. Allow a reasonable length of time for publication. (Plan, develop, and submit the manuscript accordingly.)

9. Answer queries of the editors raised in the editorial process and read proof on a timely basis.

10. Make provisions for the preparation of an index for any publication that requires one.

11. Avoid premature announcements about publications, publication dates, quantity, distribution, etc.

12. Assist in the distribution of materials.

* * * * *

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